

Does the "Power Control Group" Influence the Publication of News in the Media of the United States?

1. From Frederick L. Pilot
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The story by Richard E. Sprague in the May issue of "PURSUIT" ("Congressional Investigation of Political Assassinations in the United States: The Two Approaches: From the Bottom Up vs. From the Top Down") was very disturbing to me.

Mr. Sprague has accused certain elements of the press — our last line of defense for our domestic freedoms in this nation — of participating in a conspiracy to obstruct justice by covering up the truth concerning the JFK assassination. Does Mr. Sprague realize the gravity of his assertion?

I was profoundly shocked to read in Mr. Sprague's story that "The New York Times" and "The Washington Post", including none other than Watergate editor Ben Bradlee, are active participants in a "Power Control Group" conspiracy to conceal from the public the truth behind the untimely death of John F. Kennedy, and to sabotage a House investigation into the murder.

Frankly, I find such an allegation extremely hard to believe. Ben Bradlee and JFK were intimate friends. Could Mr. Bradlee, in good conscience, cover up the murder of his old friend?

In all fairness, I feel Mr. Bradlee should have been given an opportunity to respond to Mr. Sprague's allegations. So, I sent him a copy of Mr. Sprague's story, asking him to comment on the charges leveled against him.

His response follows this letter.

I am a charter subscriber to "PURSUIT", and have found it interesting.

My extensive reading, attendance at lectures given by the CIPA (Committee to Investigate Political Assassinations) and the AIB, and my visits to the National Archives (to view the photographic evidence), and Dealey Plaza, have aroused in me much doubt about the official explanation of President Kennedy's shooting.

I believe that the true facts and circumstances of his assassination have been officially suppressed. And I believe we need to know why. But simply to make accusations and theorize won't answer that question.

The credo of "PURSUIT", "facts, information, and truth," is a noble one for any publication devoted to serving its readers. Only if it is adhered to will your credibility remain intact. Publications like

"PURSUIT" need all the credibility obtainable, especially in view of the many "supermarket scandal sheets" that seem to have a monopoly on the journalistic investigation of the JFK assassination.

Please don't discredit yourself. Document your evidence. Back up your stories. Keep asking questions about the JFK assassination and the others that followed. And most important of all, don't lose track of the goal you are pursuing: TRUTH.

In addition, please consider creating an opinion page for editorials and readers' letters. Also, "commentary" and "analysis" inserts, where appropriate.

2. From Mr. Benjamin C. Bradlee
Executive Editor
1150 15th St., NW
Washington, DC

To: Mr. Frederick L. Pilot

My father taught me never to play poker with a man named "Doc," never to eat at a diner called "Mom's," and never to get in an argument with those people who believe in a conspiracy theory of history.

I am not now, nor have I ever been, a member of the "Power Control Group."

3. From Richard E. Sprague
Hartsdale, NY

(quoted from the May 1977 article in "PURSUIT")

... A precise definition of the "Power Control Group" is:

that group of individuals or organizations that knowingly participated in one or more of the assassination conspiracies or related murders or attempted murders, plus all the individuals who knowingly participated in or are still participating in the coverups of those conspiracies or murders. ...

Anyone who has honestly and openly taken the time to examine just a few pieces of "hard" evidence in any one of the four major cases has no trouble at all deciding that there were in fact individual conspiracies in each one.

4. From Former Congressman Thomas N. Downing
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

(quoted from "If Oswald Had Been Brought to Trial ...", in the May 1976 issue of "PURSUIT")

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The Death of de Mohrenschildt, Witness Regarding President Kennedy's Assassination

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Readers will be familiar with the broad details of George de Mohrenschildt's recent death. It is true as the papers indicate that de Mohrenschildt had recently been having mental treatment in Dallas. In addition, he told Willem Oltmans, the Dutch reporter, that he was in league with Oswald, and that now "they" were out to kill him. Those who have followed Fletcher Prouty's various articles on the "Secret Team" will know that faking suicides is now a fine art. Prouty also mentions that the gun-in-the-mouth method is a favorite with the "Team". So the answer is that we don't know whether de Mohrenschildt jumped or was pushed.

What we can do is to dispel fairly quickly the "nutty professor" image some of the press built up around the victim (while at the same time awarding him the innocent-sounding title of "a geologist").

In Chapter 7 of "A Heritage of Stone" Jim Garrison provides the following information: de Mohrenschildt, he tells us, was a consulting geologist. He was born in Czarist Russia, son of a nobleman and landowner. His family had fled from the Bolsheviks, and for a long time his father had been imprisoned by them. De Mohrenschildt's schooling extended from Poland through Belgium and France to Texas. During World War II he had worked for French Intelligence. He spoke French, Russian, Polish, Spanish, German, and a smattering of other languages. All of the latter, Garrison indicates, is on record in Volume 9 of the Warren Commission Hearings. As a geologist, Garrison continues, de Mohrenschildt had travelled extensively throughout the world. He had spent a year in Yugoslavia representing the International Cooperation Administration, located in Washington. He had gone to Ghana allegedly as a stamp collector, though he was consulting geologist for an oil company at the time. During the Bay of Pigs he was in Guatemala where he had just concluded a long trek through Central America. At the time of JFK's assassination he was in Haiti. He was a member of the exclusive Dallas Petroleum Club and had many high-level contacts in the business world. He was Oswald's most frequent companion on his return to Dallas from Russia.

This picture, based upon research and investigation, is considerably enlarged upon in "James Hepburn's" "Farewell America". This book should be approached with some caution. It is generally supposed to be a compilation by the French Intelligence service under de Gaulle, and it is by no means certain whether it should be regarded as an expose or a simple piece of black propaganda. Whatever the case, "Hepburn" alleges that de Mohrenschildt had Oswald under surveillance for the CIA. Nicknamed "the Chin-

ese" (le Chinois?), de Mohrenschildt had been recruited by the Office of Strategic Studies during the war and entered the University of Texas in 1944, where he obtained his degree in geological engineering (specializing in petroleum geology). The CIA used him in Iran, Egypt, Indonesia, Panama, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua. De Mohrenschildt had close connections with the oil industry, in particular with the presidents of McGee Oil, Kerr, Continental Oil, Gogwell Oil Equipment Company, Texas Eastern Corporation, and with John Mecom of Houston.

To "Hepburn's" allegations may be added some interesting coincidences reported by Penn Jones in Vol. 4 of "Forgive My Grief". Penn notes that Oswald, de Mohrenschildt and the Paines all made trips during the latter third of April 1963. The Paines left Dallas on the 24th; Oswald left New Orleans on the same date. Meanwhile de Mohrenschildt had already left Dallas on April 19. Penn Jones suggests that there may be some connection between these departures and a speech which Vice-President Johnson delivered in Dallas on April 23 announcing that JFK would be visiting Dallas later in the year and would be dining at the Trade Mart. Johnson, Jones reports, made a jocular remark to the effect that however dissatisfied with JFK his audience was, they should not shoot him until next November! Possibly LBJ meant to say "November next year" (election year). □

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... None of us will forget what happened in Dallas almost 12 years ago. I was as stunned as any American. When I had the first news that the President had been shot, I prayed that it would not be fatal. And next I found myself in somewhat of a trauma for the next few days Then came the appointment of the President's Commission chaired by Chief Justice Earl Warren. They investigated and reported concluding that there was no evidence of conspiracy and that Lee Harvey Oswald, alone and unassisted, was responsible for the death of President Kennedy and the wounding of Governor John B. Connally of Texas. And there the matter was supposed to rest for all time.

I did not believe it.

I did not believe that one man could have fired three shots in six seconds from a cheap, foreign-made, single-shot-bolt-action rifle with the deadly accuracy credited by the FBI and the Warren Commission. No way.

The great majority of Americans, it seems, never believed it.

5. From the Editor Edmund C. Berkeley
Editor, "People and the PURSUIT of Truth"

One of the good books on logical argument is "Applied Logic" by W.W. Little, W. Harold Wilson, and W. Edgar Moore, published by Houghton Mifflin and Co., Boston, Mass., 1955, and used for many years as a text for students at the University of Florida. It lists 39 fallacies, and one of the fallacies is "Diversion", a wandering from the subject, a turning aside from the path, a failure to stick to the point (see page 17).

Mr. Bradlee has the unusual distinction of committing four fallacies of diversion in the first sentence of his letter. Political assassination in the United States has nothing to do with (1) playing poker, (2) eating in diners, (3) getting into argu-
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Based on a report in "JFK Assassination Forum", April 4, 1977,
published by B. Burden.

ments with certain kinds of people, and (4) what his father taught him.

Second, Mr. Bradlee has the unusual distinction of denying that he is one of a class of persons the definition of which includes him: the class of persons knowingly participating in the coverups of one or more of the conspiracies about political assassinations in the United States.

According to the dictionary, to "conspire" is "to join in a secret agreement to do an unlawful or wrongful act or to use such means to accomplish a lawful end". There is also such a thing as a "silent conspiracy". Mr. Bradlee, as the executive editor of the "Washington Post", well knows the meaning of "conspire" and the meaning of "silent conspiracy". For example, he was one of the prime movers in revealing the Watergate conspiracy that involved former President Richard M. Nixon as one of the conspirators.

Mr. Bradlee could have said "I know that there are conspiracies, currently and in history. An example is the Watergate conspiracy which involved Nixon. It seems to me possible that there was a conspiracy against President Kennedy. A conspiracy would explain far more than the lone-assassin explanation of the Warren Commission Report." This would have expressed a scientific attitude, to be expected from a sophisticated, knowledgeable, and fair editor, not an editor who is engaged in promoting the lone-assassin theory and therefore participates in the Power Control Group.

Instead, he chose to answer the question of Mr. Pilot with four irrelevancies and a statement contrary to fact. Mr. Bradlee's answer is amazing, and is food for thought. Mr. Bradlee performs a disservice to the cause of truth in the United States.

If at any time the editors of "PURSUIT" magazine make misstatements, we shall do our best to publish corrections promptly. If at any time a person is maligned unfairly in our pages, we shall certainly give him a fair hearing in our pages. □

Kostman — Continued from page 6

shipments of arms to Castro, and who was particularly close to the Cuban premier. Ruby conveyed an offer of \$15,000 from someone in Las Vegas if McKeown would help get three unnamed people out of jail in Cuba. Three weeks later Ruby met McKeown and asked for a personal letter of introduction to Castro in return for \$25,000.

McKeown appeared on a CBS Special Report in November, 1975, relating a previously untold story. According to McKeown, Oswald, in the company of two Cubans, had approached him seeking to buy rifles shortly before the assassination. McKeown was not asked about his 1959 contact with Ruby.

McKeown was also prosecuted for offenses similar to Rothman's. His co-defendants included Cubans who have close business and personal ties to Bernard Barker, the Watergate burglar, and have been involved in cocaine smuggling. ("The New York Times", 6/22/70; Horace Sutton, "Curious Intrigues of Cuban Miami" in "The Assassinations: Dallas and Beyond", Eds. Hoch, Scott, Stetler.) Another Watergate burglar, Eugenio Martinez, was alleged to have been involved in Jose Aleman's circle of anti-Batista terrorists. Yet another member of the Watergate team,

Frank Sturgis, (as Frank Fiorini) is named in 1961 Senate testimony as having supplied Castro with arms as well as having served with his army and government. Sturgis, of course, became violently anti-Castro after the revolution. Recently, the Assassinations Committee asked Trafficante about Sturgis' organization, the "International Anti-Communist Brigade", which was said to be financed by a group of dispossessed Havana gambling operators. (Hans Turner, "Counterrevolutionary Agent".)

David Ferrie

David Ferrie, Jim Garrison's chief suspect in his New Orleans investigation, was employed by Carlos Marcello, the reputed mob overlord of New Orleans. Marcello is a close associate of Trafficante in gambling and narcotics operations.

Ferrie was an American who flew missions for Castro before 1959 and later was active in the CIA's attempt to overthrow him. Ferrie was found dead five days after his name was mentioned in connection with the assassination. The New Orleans District Attorney's office first became interested in Ferrie the day after the assassination because of convincing evidence that he knew Oswald as a youth. (More information on this can be found in the recently declassified Warren Commission Document 75.) When Ferrie was arrested on November 25, 1963, it was learned that he had just returned from an unexplained trip to Texas. Ferrie was employed as an investigator for the legal defense team of Carlos Marcello, who was fighting deportation, in court, on the day of the assassination. Both Marcello and Trafficante have extensive connections to the Teamsters Union.

Narcotics

Trafficante's involvement in narcotics provides another possible link to Ruby. In 1968, Trafficante travelled to Hong Kong and Saigon, reportedly to reorganize the heroin trade. The son of a member of the Trafficante family, Frank Furci was mentioned several times in testimony before the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee in the late 1960's as having been involved in fraudulent currency manipulations in Saigon. Another mobster who was in Saigon even earlier was Victor Resignio, reportedly the son-in-law of Vito Genovese. Resignio was named in the testimony of Nancy Perrin Rich (whose husband was a gun-runner and who, herself, was a former Ruby stripper) as having been associated with Ruby in gun-running. As for narcotics, the Warren Commission received evidence (23H 369-70) from an informant of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, Eileen Curry, who knew Ruby, that Ruby was running an efficient drug smuggling business across the Mexican border and had the fix in with local authorities.

There is also the story of Rose Cheramie, a Ruby employee who was admitted to a Louisiana hospital just before the assassination suffering from narcotics withdrawal and severe injuries apparently incurred when she was thrown out of a moving automobile. Cheramie indicated her companions were making a drug delivery. She reportedly made statements on Nov. 22, 1963, indicating foreknowledge of the assassination. She was killed by a hit-and-run driver in Texas in 1965.

(To be continued)